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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

Letter dated 23 March 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text, in English and French, of a statement of the European Community and its member States on the refugees from Burma, issued at Lisbon and Brussels on 20 March 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly under item 97 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Statement on the refugees from Burma, issued by the European Community and its member States on 20 March 1992

The Community and its member States express their deepening concern at the policies of the Burmese military authorities which have caused about 140,000 Muslim refugees to flee into Bangladesh. The refugees' suffering has created a sense of horror among the international community and places a burden on those providing essential humanitarian assistance. The Bangladeshi authorities are making a great effort to cope with a difficult situation and are attempting to reduce the suffering of refugees by allowing international relief organizations access to their camps. The Community and its member States welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's statement on this matter on 6 March 1992 and wish to stress their concern at the threat to regional stability caused by the Burmese actions.

The Community and its member States note that other minorities in Burma are also suffering intolerable repression, and repeat the terms of the démarche they made to the Burmese authorities in Rangoon on March 1992:

To call on the military government to reassure all elements of the local population of their willingness to guarantee human and civil rights in accordance with the United Nations Charter and related internationally recognized norms.

To urge the military government to refrain from taking further military action against minorities.

To call on the military government to confirm their readiness to seek peaceful solutions to all ethnic conflicts which will benefit all those living in Burma.